

FISCAL YEAR 1974 NARRATIVE REPORT

WETLAND MANAGEMENT OFFICE

FERGUS FALLS, MINNESOTA



Sunrise on a Grant County lake

I.M.U.



Dusk on a Pope County marsh (Avok Slough)

I.M.U.

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Wetland Management Office
Fergus Falls, Minnesota

FISCAL YEAR 1974

WATERFOWL PRODUCTION AREA NARRATIVE REPORT

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Alan Kvern, Laborer (6/12/74-9/13/74)

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The "Front Line" part of our team. From left to right: Dick Nord, Gary Tischer, Al Kvern, John Neska, Si Melby and Chuck Vukonich. Our player-coach and quarterback, Marv Mansfield, was in the men's room at the time!
Inky Urke, Nov. '74

*How did this
mottly looking
crew get
a good-looking
R. & F. ones?*

*It all depends on
your point of view
she's a Doll, but
they ain't all that
bad either!
One of the Yells
down the line.*

*Clean desk but look
at the mail box
an example of all
the work a Chick does!*

*Looks like unread
narratives to me*



Miss Inga Mae (Inky) Urke, our "Rear Support" part of the team, in charge of supplies, finance and cheerleading.

Kay Svare, '73

I. GENERAL

A. Description of Area

The Fergus Falls Wetland Management District is located in Grant, Douglas, Otter Tail and Wilkin Counties in West Central Minnesota. It is in an area of numerous potholes within the transition zone extending from the edge of the old pine forests of northeast Otter Tail County through the oak, basswood, maple forest region, into the true native prairie region found along the western fringe.

A total of 176 management units, containing 25,348 acres, have been purchased to date. These figures represent completed and paid purchases. Incompleted options are not included, nor are lands traded to the State in return for lands now part of the Sherburne NWR.

In addition to the fee purchases, 9,657 wetland acres have been protected from draining, burning and filling through the acquisition of 330 wetland easements.

B. Status of the Acquisition Program

As shown in the following tables, the rate of both fee and easement acquisition has stabilized at a low level in comparison to previous years. The primary reason for the low rate stems from the fact that the acquisition staff has been assigned to work primarily in counties outside of this district during this report period.

TABLE I. Trends in Fee and Easement Acquisition (Paid)

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>NO. OF NEW FEE TRACTS</u>	<u>ACRES</u>	<u>NO. OF NEW EASEMENTS</u>	<u>WETLAND ACRES</u>
1962	18	701.7	0	0
1963	34	3,456.7	7	224.0
1964	58	3,906.0	25	702.5
1965	73	5,293.1	29	715.0
1966	53	2,885.9	46	1,291.0
1967	23	1,601.8	102	3,176.0
1968	26	1,788.2	50	1,540.0
1969	24	2,118.7	31	968.0
1970	31	2,207.7	29	742.0
1971	16	1,561.0	3	40.0
1972	6	236.7	4	145.0
FY 1973	2	203.0	*	*
FY 1974	4	105.7	4	113.6
TOTAL	368	26,066.2	330	9,657.1
LESS	-12**	-718.3**	- -	- - -
GRAND TOTAL	356	25,347.9	330	9,657.1

* Included in calendar year 1972

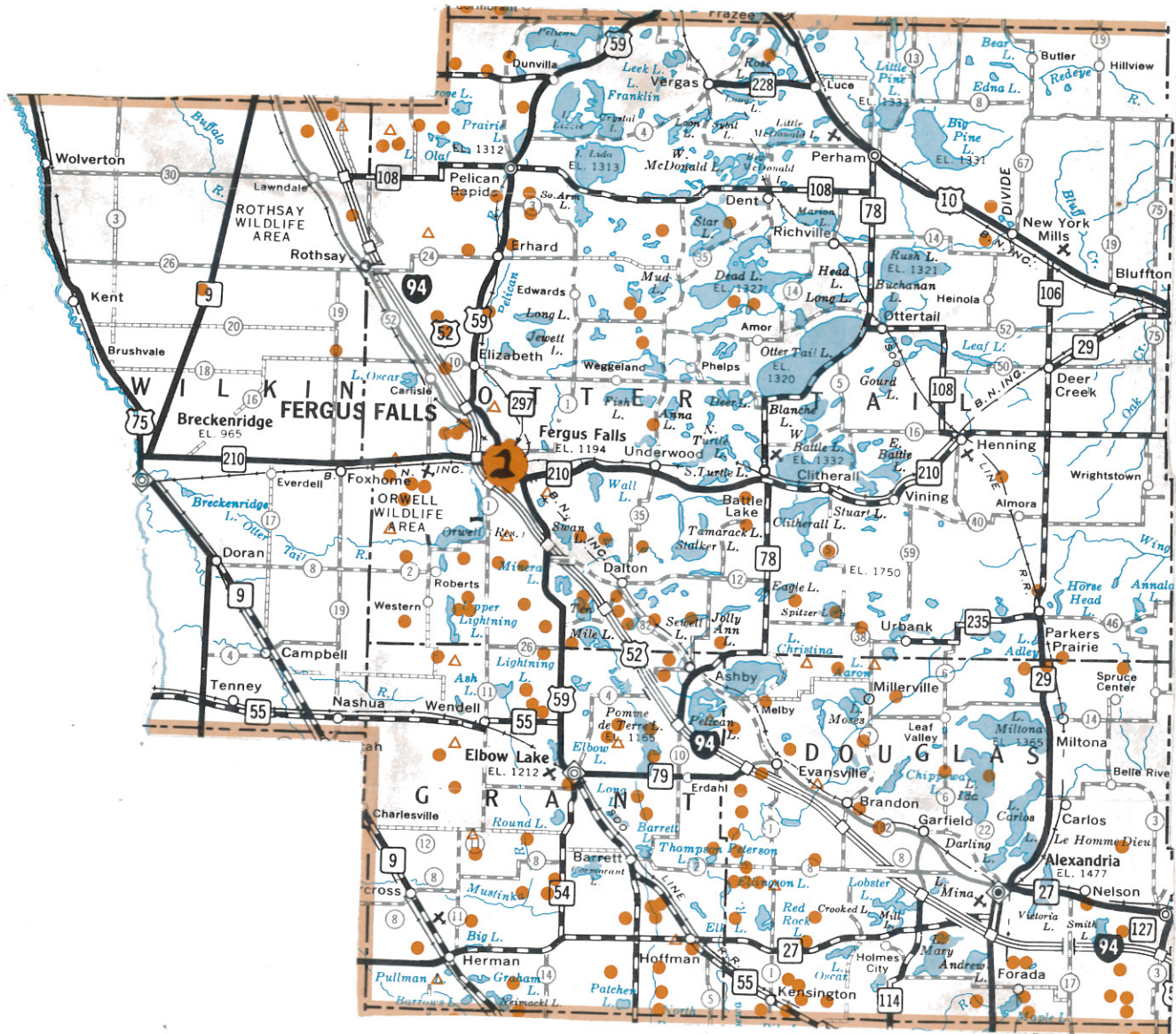
** Lands traded to State of Mn. for lands now part of Sherburne NWR

WATERFOWL PRODUCTION AREAS
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF SPORT FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE
DIVISION OF WILDLIFE REFUGES



Fergus Falls Wetland Management District

FERGUS FALLS WETLAND MANAGEMENT DISTRICT



- Waterfowl Production Area
- ▲ Closed Area
- ① Wetland Management District Offices

TABLE 2. Status of Fee Acquisition as of June 30, 1974

<u>COUNTY</u>	<u>NO. OF TRACTS*</u>	<u>NO. MGT. UNITS</u>	<u>TOTAL FEE ACRES</u>	<u>WETLAND ACRES</u>	<u>GOALS TOTAL ACRES</u>
Douglas	103	49	6,752.1	2,688.6	10,000
Grant	90	41	6,499.3	2,598.4	9,100
Otter Tail	150	80	11,023.6	4,214.9	22,000
Willkin	13	6	1,072.9	429.2	1,320
TOTALS	356	176	25,347.9	9,931.1	42,420

The figures in Table 2 take into account the lands traded to State of Minnesota for lands now part of Sherburne NWR, including: two management units containing 2 tracts and 126.0 acres in Douglas County and five management units containing 10 tracts and 592.3 acres in Otter Tail County. Tracts traded to the State contained 71.0 wetland acres in Douglas County and 387.9 wetland acres in Otter Tail County.

Two new management units were started during this report period. Three new tracts were added in rounding out existing management units. One land exchange with a private landowner was completed whereby the Service gained 16 acres of wetlands and a net increase in total acreage of 15.7 acres.

TABLE 3. Status of Easement Acquisition as of June 30, 1974

<u>COUNTY</u>	<u>NO. OF EASEMENTS**</u>	<u>WETLAND ACRES**</u>	<u>TOTAL ACRES</u>	<u>GOALS TOTAL ACRES**</u>
Douglas	109	3,353.0	17,863.1	37,900
Grant	42	1,213.6	5,319.5	38,000
Otter Tail	172	4,923.5	25,975.3	56,500
Willkin	7	167.0	900.4	2,650
TOTALS	330	9,657.1	50,058.3	135,050

* Figures from Management files of separate parcels of land, not to be confused with Realty case figures.

** From Realty records.

C. Weather Conditions

Following an unusually dry spring with little runoff, most small wetlands were dry and larger marshes dropped rapidly in July, 1973, when there were several days with temperatures in the 90's. Even though we received 3.25" precipitation in July and 5.5" in August, marshes remained in poor to fair condition through the brooding season. Normal weather patterns prevailed through mid September, however, 4.42" of precipitation (well above normal) was received in late September and early October.

The first freezing temperature, 32 degrees, occurred on 9/17 and the general marsh freeze-up occurred on 11/9. Rather mild winter conditions prevailed, no more than 10" of snow accumulated, and the coldest temperature reached -27 degrees on 1/1/74. No severe blizzards occurred.

Most of the spring run off had occurred by March 15th and at best, it was only fair. Larger marshes remained frozen through April 15th. A little more than 6" rainfall occurred in April and May. Only 1½" of rain fell in June and July. The latter half of July was unusually hot. Some oats crops were reported lost on sandy soils in Grant County. Marsh levels dropped rapidly except in northwest Otter Tail County.

D. Habitat Conditions

1. Water

Recorded in the section "Weather Conditions".

2. Food and Cover

Poor water levels in the spring and early summer of 1973 left most emergent vegetation high and dry. Broods were forced to seek cover on type IV and V marshes. Nesting cover appeared adequate on most WPA's, although on some units, it is in need of rejuvenation.

Eighteen corn plots were planted for use by pheasants and deer during the winter months. Wildlife use of these patches has generated many favorable comments from people who have visited these areas during the fall and winter.

II. WILDLIFE

A. Migratory Birds

1. Waterfowl

The first influx of spring migrant waterfowl appeared during the latter part of the first week in April, 1974.

No breeding pair counts or nest searching operations were conducted this fiscal year. Thus production figures are only estimates. Though the district has some of the most desirable waterfowl habitat, the general trend seems to be a continuing decline of local breeding populations, especially mallards. Over-harvest and wetland destruction are the two main culprits.

TABLE 4. Estimated Waterfowl Breeding Population and Production*

<u>SPECIES</u>	<u>1974 BREEDING POPULATION</u>	<u>ESTIMATED PRODUCTION</u>
American coot	5,000	4,000
Canada Goose	80	100
Mallard	1,500	2,650
Gadwall	170	300
Pintail	100	150
Green Winged Teal	50	75
Blue Winged Teal	3,500	5,200
Widgeon	35	50
Shoveler	230	420
Wood Duck	210	370
Redhead	250	315
Ring Necked Duck	140	160
Canvasback	70	90
Lesser Scaup	30	20
Bufflehead	15	10
Ruddy	155	200
TOTAL	11,535	14,100

* Includes both fee areas and easements

The district has 46 cone structures, 7 goose platforms and 14 "Nelson" structures, which we received from a local individual. None of the latter structures were used, probably because of poor construction that didn't offer birds a view of approaching predators and the surrounding marsh. Nesting use of the cones and goose platforms is given in the following table.

We need to discuss "quality control" with you guys. Look like half your production is black mallards. R.F.M.

you mean Ivory-billed Teal?

TABLE 5. Artificial Nesting Structure Use

-5-

<u>Tract Name</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>Structure</u>	<u>Used (Yes/No)</u>	<u>Species</u>	<u>Clutch Size</u>
Froming	Otter Tail	Cone	No	- - -	- - -
Froming	"	Goose platform	No	- - -	- - -
Wiegiers	"	3 cone	1 used	Canada goose	None when checked
Wiegiers	"	Goose platform	Yes	Canada goose	7
Kube	"	4 cone	No	- - -	- - -
Morrison	"	4 cone	No	- - -	- - -
Nelson Estate	"	2 cone	1 used	Mallard	12
Horstmann	"	10 cone	1 used	Mallard	9
Thompson	"	3 cone	No	- - -	- - -
Hailby	"	4 cone	No	- - -	- - -
Tweet	"	4 cone	No	- - -	- - -
Sethre	"	4 cone	1 used	Mallard	10
Bergerud	"	4 cone	No	- - -	- - -
Wildung	"	3 cone	2 used	Mallard	2, 12
Kroneman	"	Goose platform	No	- - -	- - -
Busko	"	Goose platform	Yes	Mallard	10
Kunz	"	Goose platform	No	- - -	- - -
Headquarters	"	Two platforms	No	- - -	- - -

Several pairs of geese were observed nesting on rat houses on our WPA's. These birds came from flocks located in Fergus Falls, Alexandria and Ashby and all were of the maxima subspecies.

Occasionally whistling swans can be seen loafing on our WPA's, especially during spring and fall migrations.

2. Marsh and Water Birds - First Arrivals

<u>Species</u>	<u>Date</u>
Great Blue Heron	3/28
Pied Billed Grebe	3/31
Sandhill Crane	4/2
Double Crested Cormorant	4/10
Common Loon	4/13
White Pelican	4/14
Common Egret	4/17
Black Crowned Night Heron	4/24
Red Necked Grebe	4/24
Little Green Heron	4/26
Eared Grebe	4/26

Other residents commonly seen on WPA's include: American Bittern, Horned Grebe and Sora Rail. Occasionally one will observe a Western Grebe. Sandhill Cranes are seen most often in May along the Glacial Lake Agassiz Beach line.

3. Shorebirds, Gulls and Terns

<u>Species</u>	<u>Date</u>
Killdeer	4/2
Ring Billed Gull	4/8
Herring Gull	4/8
Marbled Godwit	4/10
Wilson Snipe	4/18
Upland Plover	5/16

Other birds commonly observed on our WPA's are: Franklin's Gull, Bonapart's Gull, Black Tern, Common Tern, Ruddy Turnstone, Lesser Yellowlegs, Least Sandpiper, and Forster's Tern.

4. Doves

The first sighting of the Mourning Dove in the district was April 2nd. Doves, as usual, were very common with an estimated peak population of 1,400 on August 1st. In August, 1973, we conducted a dove banding project in which 92 doves were banded. As of this date, no bands have been returned.



*what is it
lodge to
find page 3*

Beaver have created desirable waterfowl habitat on the Kloos WPA (37), Grant County. Note the two lodges in the same impoundment! Wood ducks are often seen here, along the Mustinka Creek well within the prairie zone.

Nord, Apr. '73



Part of the Fergus Falls flock of about 500 Canada geese stopped in to visit us at the Headquarters marsh.

Mansfield, Oct. '73

Most doves nest in farm groves and brushy fence rows, but several have been observed nesting on the ground on burned marsh edges and road ditch banks.

B. Upland Game Birds

Pheasant numbers are still relatively low but appear to be the highest since the hard winter of 1968-69. Growing roosters and broods were often observed on areas in Douglas, Grant and southern Otter Tail Counties. The mild winters of 1972-73 and 1973-74 explain most of the increase in pheasant numbers.

According to the DNR, the ruffed grouse population is down, which may be a result of the low numbers of male aspen buds. In the wooded portion of the district, huntable populations of these birds can be found.

Gray partridge occur in limited numbers throughout the district. There were two recorded observations: one in Section 10 of Pomme de Terre Township, Grant County, and another on the Arfsten Unit in southern Otter Tail County.

C. Other Birds

Raptorial birds most commonly observed are the marsh, red-tailed, sparrow, sharp-shinned, Cooper's and rough-legged hawks, and the horned owl.

The only unusual sightings were a peregrine falcon near Dalton, and a magpie and pileated woodpecker on the Scribner Tract near Elizabeth.

D. Big Game Animals

It is common to see white-tailed deer on most WPA's in the district, even in the prairie zone where they find shelter in cattail marshes and abandoned fields and farm groves. Although white-tails are the only resident big game species, an occasional moose wanders into the district.

E. Fur Animals, Predators, Rodents, and Other Animals

Nothing significant to report except that we have plenty of pocket gophers and predators, at least some of our neighbors say we have.

F. Rare, Endangered and Status Undetermined Species

During April, 1974, prairie chickens were seen on two WPA's in Wilkin County and three units along the western edge of Otter Tail County. A booming ground with 11 birds was located on

plowing adjacent to the Bolding-Monson Unit in Wilkin County. Also, eleven other birds were found booming along the north edge of the N. P. R. R. Unit in western Otter Tail County.

Prairie chickens have been reported on or near the Horstmann-Loomer WPA and Orwell Reservoir area but no booming grounds have been located there. Three booming birds were found in April, 1974, on a mowed strip of native prairie one mile southwest of the Fabian-Frederickson Unit. These birds were discovered twelve miles south of any recorded sightings within the last ten years or so.

We quote the following report, "Inventory of Prairie Chickens on Western Minnesota Range, 1974" by Morris Patterson, Minnesota DNR, and Leo Kirsch of the N. Prairie Research Station.

"The Minnesota Prairie Chicken Society sponsored an inventory of prairie chicken booming grounds in western Minnesota during the spring of 1974. Personnel of the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, the Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Crookston Campus of the University of Minnesota did the job.

The inventory was conducted to obtain base data on prairie chicken populations and their location within the western Minnesota range. Such information will be used in planning management on lands controlled by the Department of Natural Resources, the Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Nature Conservancy in this area. The 1974 survey data compared to future survey data will be used as a basis for judging the effectiveness of management programs on lands controlled by these agencies.

Efforts were concentrated in Becker, Clay, Mahanomen, Norman, Otter Tail, Polk, Red Lake, and Wilkin Counties which contain the largest remnant prairie chicken populations. The habitat remaining is generally mesic prairie which has escaped complete agricultural exploitation. Most of this remaining habitat which is occupied by prairie chickens has been preserved through purchase by the Department of Natural Resources, the Fish and Wildlife Service and the Nature Conservancy. Most of the preserved habitat is in various stages of degradation because of past use, protection from fire, or both. This degradation is primarily in the form of woody plant or exotic plant invasion.

During past years, personnel of the Department of Natural Resources determined blocks of habitat with histories of prairie chicken use or with potential for prairie chicken use. These blocks were surveyed by a systematic listening search to determine approximate booming ground locations. The booming grounds

were located later and the birds counted either by direct observation or by flushing them from the ground. The counts therefore include both male and female prairie chickens but the percent females is believed to be small. Nearly all of the booming grounds on the western range are believed to have been located during 1974.

Range in Central Minnesota where prairie chickens are still reported was not included in the survey.

Results and Discussion

Copies of the tabulated survey data in total and summarized by county are attached. We will refrain from speculating on what the total population may be based on this data. Substantial numbers of prairie chickens were found and based on this and the number of birds found on individual booming grounds, the population is not in immediate danger.

The objective of obtaining base data on prairie chicken populations and their locations was attained. Attaining the second objective will be more difficult. Management practices known to be beneficial to prairie chickens must now be applied on the land and the annual population surveys must be continued to assess the effectiveness of these practices."

G. Fish

To date, thirty seven species of fish (mostly minnows) have been identified in the district. Although our areas provide no sport fisheries in themselves, some bank fishing is done for walleyes on the Stowe Lake WPA where our land adjoins Stowe Lake.

The Spaulding Unit has been used for raising Northern pike fingerlings and the Pomme de Terre, Fluegge, and Fedje WPA's were used as walleye rearing ponds by local sportsmen's clubs.

H. Reptiles and Amphibians

Thus far, twelve species of reptiles and amphibians have been identified in our district. All except snapping and painted turtles have been preserved for display purposes. Most commonly seen are leopard frogs, garter snakes and tiger salamanders.

I. Diseases

None noted.

Table 6. County summary of 1974 prairie chicken survey in western Minnesota

County	Number of booming grounds		Ave. no. of birds per ground counted	Number of prairie chickens on grnds.	
	Located	Counted		Counted	Estimated*
Clay	24	20	13.2	263	315
Becker	5	5	13.2	66	66
Mahnomen	6	6	8.2	49	49
Ottertail	2	2	6.0	12	12
Polk	14	11	8.5	94	111
Norman	11	11	12.2	134	134
Red Lake	2	2	5.5	11	11
Wilkin	18	15	13.1	196	235
	82	72	11.5	825	941

*Grounds located but not counted were credited with average number of birds found on counted grounds in the county.

III. WPA DEVELOPMENT AND MAINTENANCE

A. Physical Development

1. Headquarters

Twenty-four yards of crushed rock were spread on soft spots in the parking area. Ten square wooden posts were set in the ground to designate the east parking area. A large, rustic, redwood recognition sign and field stone standard was installed on the headquarters front lawn.

Roll bars were installed on the TD6 and on the Ferret. Steel protective cab screens were fabricated and installed on two pickup trucks. Hand tool boxes were installed on three pickup trucks.

2. Fence Construction

Total boundary fence construction in FY 1974 amounted to 1.46 miles. All boundary fence was 4-strand barbed wire, done on force account at a total cost of \$1,960.00. In addition, twenty parking areas were fenced, primarily to prevent vehicle trespass and to indicate off road parking. Most parking lot fencing was 3-strand barbed wire done on force account at a total cost of about \$2,380.00. Including the above, the Service has constructed a total of 42.67 miles of fence in this district since the WPA program was initiated.



Mansfield, May '73

Si Melby "mudding in" the field stone on standard for the Headquarters sign. That's not really large chunks of North Dakota fall out around the completed sign.



Mansfield, June '73

Look Sweet!
R. F. Davis

Nice
job

Table 7. Fence Construction 7/1/63 - 6/30/74

<u>COUNTY</u>	<u>Tract</u>	<u>Miles</u>
Otter Tail	Swenson (58)	.13
" "	Julsrud (299)	.25
" "	P.C.A. (289)	.12
" "	Bjerketvedt (129)	.13
" "	Johnson (92)	.21
" "	Johnson (92)	.05*
" "	P.C.A. (289)	.06
" "	Pesch (120)	.10*
" "	Thompson (36)	.10*
" "	Frigaard (83)	.20*
" "	Nelson (63b)	.10*
" "	Fronning (197)	.10*
" "	N.P. R.R. (255)	.07*
" "	Meyer (291)	.10*
" "	Lein (66)	.05*
" "	Tweeton (191)	.17*
" "	Halby (125)	.15*
Willkin	Brown (26) (west)	.07*
"	Brown (26) (south)	.07*
Douglas	Russell (119)	.25
"	Augustson (21a)	.10
"	Kuhnau (187)	.06
"	Olson (66) (north)	.05*
"	Olson (66) (south)	.10*
"	Schmitz (72)	.07*
Grant	Spink (28)	.12*
"	Spink (28)	.15
"	Green (23)	.05*
"	Demaree (11a)	.05*
"	Morfev (13)	.07*
TOTAL FY 1974		3.30 miles

*Parking lot and barrier fence to prevent vehicular trespass.

3. Fence Removal and Miscellaneous Clean Up

A total of 4.85 miles of interior fence was removed from nine management units. This work was completed on force account on Otter Tail County WPA's 300, 258, 223, 293, 58, 287 and 42; Douglas County 196, and Grant County 23. Nine pieces of old farm equipment scattered on five units were removed as well as two pickup loads of beer cans and junk from the Ten Mile Lake Unit.

4. Marsh Restoration

In addition to the eleven ditch and tile plugs done by dozer contractors in conjunction with the building site renovation, some force account work was done to restore marshes on the Wieggers Unit (124), Otter Tail County. This includes the installation of two tile plugs, placement of a drop tube overflow on a tile line that was intentionally plugged in previous years, and the raising of the spillway on an older, small earthen dam.

5. Renovation of Building Sites

Five separate dozer contractors completed the renovation of 21 building sites during the fiscal year. They filled or covered 94 building foundations, 22 car bodies or pieces of large machinery, 15 dumps, and blocked ditches or drain tiles to restore 11 drained marshes. Total cost of these operations was \$2,734.00.

TABLE 8. Building Site - Dump Renovation Summary

COUNTY	TRACT	CAR BODIES		DUMPS	DITCH PLUGS
		BLDGs.	& MACH.		
Grant	Steinlicht (55)	5		2	2
"	Levenson (57)	5	5	1	1
Grant	Rasmussen (113)	6	3	1 lge.	
"	Henton (126)	9	1 combine		2
"	Enquist (18)	3		1	
"	Blakesley (86)	5	1	1	
Otter Tail	Putnam (258)	4	1 combine		
"	Duenow (303)	8	2		
"	Staff (285)	4	3	1	
"	Headquarters (293)	2	1		
"	Tuel (91)	4	1	1	
"	Stich (26)	4		1	
Douglas	Wagner (61)	4			
"	Biewer (60)	4	1	1	
"	Kline (50)	5		1	2
"	Hagedorn (22)	2			
"	Hokanson (52)	3		1	2
"	Rager (144)	4		1	
"	Foslien (11)	6	1	1	2
"	Bredeson (194)	5	2	1	
"	Stroh (84)	2			
TOTALS	21	94	22	15	11

*where are
recyclable
w/ by bury?
we do have
limited rubble
if non recyclable
resources are used
a conservation agency?
MOK*



Nord, Aug. '73

Building site before and after renovation on the Tuel WPA (91), Otter Tail County. The barn foundation (shown) along with the house basement, a dump, 2 car bodies, a well pit and several other foundations were filled or buried on this unit.



Nord, Aug. '73



Nord, Aug. '73

House basement filled with junk on the Stich WPA (26),
Otter Tail County. Below, same site after renovation
and seeding.



Nord, Aug. '73

6. Posting - Open Areas

Eight new WPA's having 9.5 miles of boundary were posted open to public hunting in FY 1974. New tracts posted were Douglas County 195 and 196; Otter Tail County 282, 300, 303, and 310; and Grant County 59b and 129.

In addition, Service signs were removed and replaced with State signs on 12 tracts making up 6 management units. These parcels were turned over to the State in exchange for state land now included in the Sherburne NWR.

The conversion from the old "blue goose" boundary signs to the new green signs was completed during this period. As usual, numerous signs were replaced after being destroyed by gunshot, neighbors' farming equipment, and heavy equipment used in clearing snow from road intersections.

7. Posting - Closed Areas

During August, 1973, nineteen closed areas, having 53.5 miles of boundary, were checked to see that they were properly posted at 30 rod intervals. Shot up or missing signs were replaced.

8. Parking Areas

See Fence Construction.

9. Posting - Vehicle Trespass

Having acquired a silk screen from the Regional sign shop, our maintenanceman, Luther Melby, made up 150 signs reading "Federal Law Prohibits Vehicle Trespass". They were printed on repainted old "blue goose" signs and mounted on the regular steel sign posts at the road approaches where we've had problems. Indications are that the method has worked very well in controlling vehicle trespass.

B. Plantings, Including Soil and Moisture Activity

1. Aquatic and Marsh Plants

None

2. Trees and Shrubs

In Douglas County a tree-shrub cover planting was accomplished in cooperation with the Minnesota DNR on the Fedje and Bredeson Units. We provided 300 potted Black Hills spruce (\$2.15 each)



Nord, Aug. '73
Super highway for predators on the Stich WPA (26),
Otter Tail County, courtesy of a gang of local teenage
motorcyclists. Their trail, about 2 miles over hill
and dale, was short lived, however.



Tolbers, Oct. '73
One of about 150 vehicle trespass signs put up to
discourage this problem on WPA's. Most often the sign
works, other places a fence is required.

*If this works, it
sure beats fences
and gates. DDL*

Don't let Nisbet answer you on those
tree plantings on the prairie Mow. OS

-15-

and the planting site. The State provided the labor and equipment for seedbed preparation, planting, all other stock, three years of cultivation and seed-down of the area between the rows.

Each area was approximately three acres in size and contained 15-23 rows of trees. Four rows of spruce trees were planted along with several rows each of Russian olive, wild plum, Siberian elm, and choke cherry. A total of 3,785 trees were planted. *Ain't Minnesota got enough trees already?*

3. Grasslands

The croplands on new WPA's are seeded as soon as possible after the expiration of the vendor's use reservation. Approximately 260 acres were seeded during the report period on 13 management units. *Black hills spruce, Russian olive, Siberian elm - and prairie chickens? H.T.*

All dense nesting cover (DNC) was seeded using our Kirschmann grass drill. The native grasses were seeded using a Nisbet grass drill. All DNC seeding was done directly into small grain stubble without a nurse crop, less three exceptions indicated on the following Seeding Summary. The native grasses were seeded directly into soybean stubble without a nurse crop.

The DNC seed mix contained 1 lb. of sweet clover, 1 lb. of alfalfa and 6 lbs. of intermediate wheatgrass per acre. Seeding mixture and rate of native grasses (number of PLS/Sq. ft.) was: Indiangrass 6.8, blue grama 0.4, big bluestem 4.6, little bluestem 5.3, sand dropseed 0.8, green needlegrass 3.3, and switchgrass 9.5.

TABLE 9. Grassland Seeding Summary - FY 1974

COUNTY	TRACT NO.	LOCATION	SEED MIX	DATE	ACRES
Douglas	Suchy (196)	All	DNC	11/13/73	5.6
"	Bredeson (194)	All	DNC	11/15/73	27.0
"	Kuhnau (187)	All	DNC	4/30/74	32.0
"	Augustson (21a)	All	DNC	6/5/74	6.0
Grant	Henton (126)	N. & E.	Natives	5/23/74	40.0
Grant	Henton (126)	S. & W.	DNC	5/1/74	21.5
Grant	Block (129)	All	DNC	11/1/73	26.0
Grant	Miles (21)	W. edge	DNC	5/1/74	2
Otter Tail	Julsrud (299)	All	DNC	10/31/73	31.0
"	Seifert (300)	All	Natives	Spring '74	30.0
"	Fabian (30)	N. end	DNC	6/11/74	12.8
"	Scribner (248)	SW cor.	DNC	6/4/74	10.7*
"	Weinrich (123)	E. edge	DNC	6/6/74	1.5
"	Fabian (30)	SE edge	DNC	Spring '74	5.2**
"	Fabian (31) & (32)	Edges	DNC	Spring '74	4.9**
"	Headquarters (293)	S ₂	DNC	Fall '73	4.0
TOTALS	13 units				260.2

* Seeded with Kirschmann grass drill immediately after cooperator seeded his wheat.

** Seeded by cooperator under Cooperative Agreement with his small grain nurse crop.

C. Cultivated Crops - Wildlife Food Patches

During the 1974 crop year, there were 612.8 acres covered under Cooperative Farming Agreements. Approximately 90 acres of corn and small grain were left unharvested on 24 management units as wildlife food patches. Another 90 acres were fallow in preparation for seed-down in 1975.

Eleven units (included above) totaling 357 acres were farmed primarily for weed control. These will be reseeded to dense nesting cover. (See units marked with an asterisk on the following table) Here the cooperator receives an additional share to cover his increased costs of land preparation, weed control and all of the reseeding costs.

TABLE 10. Cultivated Crop - Wildlife Food Patch Summary (Crop Yr. '74)

COUNTY	TRACT NO.	CROP	ACRES	COOP. SHARE	GOV'T. SHARE UNHARVESTED
Douglas	73	Corn	4.4		4.4
		Small grain	10.5	10.0	0.5
"	94	Fallow*	13.0		
"	187, 188	Corn	5.0		5.0
		Corn or sm. gr.	10.0	10.0	
"	24	Corn	15.6	10.4	5.2
"	50	Corn	15.0	10.0	5.0
		Fallow	6.0		
"	94	Corn	7.4	4.9	2.5
"	83b	S. grain*	29.0	27.6	1.4
Grant	66	Fallow*	34.0		
"	64	Corn	1.0		1.0
"	55	Fallow	7.0		
"	30	Corn	5.0		5.0
		Corn & oats	10.0	10.0	
"	110	Wheat	10.0	10.0	
		Corn	5.0		5.0
"	102	Corn	5.0		5.0
		Wheat	10.0	10.0	
"	28	Wheat	17.0	17.0	
		Corn	8.0		8.0
"	85	Corn	7.0	4.7	2.3
"	67	S. grain*	63.0	59.8	3.2
"	106	S. grain*	13.0	12.4	0.6
Wilkin	26	Fallow	15.0		
Otter Tail	107	Corn	6.0		6.0
		S. grain	12.0	12.0	
"	"	S. grain*	117.0	111.2	5.8
"	"	S. grain*	25.0	23.8	1.2
"	"	S. grain*	15.0	14.3	0.7
"	"	Fallow*	15.0		
"	"	Corn	9.0	6.0	3.0
"	"	Corn	5.0		5.0
"	"	Corn	3.3		3.3
		S. gr., whtgrs.	10.1	10.1	S. gr. 10.1 whtgrs.
		S. grain	6.6	6.6	
"	"	Corn*	14.0	13.3	.7
		Oats*	8.2	7.8	.4
"	"	Oats	10.0	10.0	
		Corn	5.0		5.0
"	"	Small grain	10.0	10.0	
		Corn	5.0		5.0
		Wheat*	10.7	10.2	0.5
TOTALS	29		612.8	432.1	90.7



Fenced parking lots like this one on the Pesch WPA (120), Otter Tail County, have solved several problems. They indicate off-road parking and have stopped wheel tracking that creates predator travel lanes, vehicle hunting day and night, isolated beer parties and resulting litter, and created a more desirable and esthetic experience for those who would walk into these areas to enjoy their outdoor activities.

Tolbers, Oct. '73



Winter wildlife food patch on the Bailey Slough Unit, Grant County.

Mansfield, Feb. '73

D. Collections and Receipts

1. Seeds and Other Propagules

None.

2. Specimens

None.

3. Building Disposal

A total of 17 buildings were sold by bid for \$536.50. These buildings have since been removed from WPA Units 107 and 303 in Otter Tail County and 83b in Douglas County.

E. Control of Vegetation

Parts of 11 management units (containing 357 acres) were plowed up under Cooperative Farming Agreements in a long term effort to control large acreages of Canada thistle and leafy spurge. This effort was concentrated on areas where past control efforts have failed and little competitive vegetation remained.

In addition, another 764 acres of thistles and spurge were mowed or treated with chemicals on 74 other management units. Also, 40 acres of seedling and small sapling cottonwoods were aerially sprayed with 2,4-D in an effort to retain prairie habitat on WPA Tract (11a) in Wilkin County. The cottonwoods appeared within two years after the tract was acquired while in a plowed fallow condition. A prairie chicken booming ground was present adjacent to this parcel in the spring of 1974.

Total control costs were \$5,909.83. About \$509.00 were contracted costs and the remainder was force account.

F. Fires

Only one wildfire was known to have occurred in the district and that was on November 10, 1973, when a deer hunter apparently started the fire on the Weinrich Tract (123), Otter Tail County. Approximately 19 acres of grassland burned in the north central portion of the unit. Little damage occurred since only a small portion of the unit burned.

No prescribed burns were implemented in FY 1974.

IV. RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

A. Grazing

No grazing permits were issued during the period. Two trespass grazing cases were temporarily allowed to graze a total of about 4 acres until boundary fences were completed separating the WPA units from existing pastures.

B. Haying

No permits were issued for haying during the period. A few trespass haying operations occurred along the boundaries of some WPA's. A personal contact and certified letter should put a stop to this practice.

C. Fur Harvest

Fur trapping is open to the public and is governed only by state regulations. The Service requires no permit or trap tags. High fur prices created increased trapping pressure in the fall of 1973. Unskinned carcass prices were as high as \$40.00 for fox, \$30-35 for mink, \$8-12 for raccoon and \$2.25 for muskrats. Beaver trapping in this portion of the state was closed this year.

D. Miscellaneous Resources

Two Sportsmen's Club groups are permitted to operate two walleye rearing ponds and one northern pike spawning area on WPA's under the supervision of the Fisheries section of the State Department of Natural Resources.

Special use permits for maintaining bee hives on WPA's have been discontinued.

V. FIELD INVESTIGATION AND APPLIED RESEARCH

A. Wildlife Management Studies

State and Federal Wetlands Closed Area Program

In 1969, a five year study was begun to determine if the local breeding mallard population could be increased by reducing the harvest of local mallards through a selective Closed Area Program. This study was continued through this report period,

whereby 19 WPA's and 16 State wildlife management areas in Douglas, Grant, Otter Tail, Wilkin and Clay Counties were closed to all trespass through the 1973 duck hunting season.

Census data, recorded for five years by aerial and ground counts on both open and closed areas, indicates questionable success. Data for 1973 continued to indicate that simply closing a given number of small wetland tracts will not protect a significant number of resident mallards. It was determined that large scale implementation of closed areas is not recommended and that carefully selected wetland and statutory refuge areas, with some development, would tend to improve the chances of achieving the goal.

It was determined over the five year period that several closed areas were consistently not holding significant numbers of mallards (or other waterfowl for that matter). It was therefore decided to open up seven of the WPA closed areas and six of the State closed areas for hunting in the fall of 1974. This left 12 WPA and 10 State management areas remaining closed for further evaluation during the 1974 duck season.

VI. EASEMENT ADMINISTRATION

All easements in Wilkin County and all in Otter Tail County, except those south of U. S. Hwy. 210 and southwest of I-94 were inspected by airplane on November 13, 1973. A total of 161 or 48.8% of all the easements in the district were inspected. No easements were inspected in Grant or Douglas Counties this year.

Thirteen suspected violations were detected from the air. These were then ground checked on November 15-16, resulting in 3 confirmed violations. One roadside marsh was burned on one easement, a type I marsh was ditched and drained on another easement, and two type I marshes were ditched and drained on the third easement.

Once a violation is confirmed by ground check, the landowner is personally contacted to inform him that he is in violation of the easement agreement and to get restoration. A certified letter regarding the contact is then sent to the violator reminding him to correct the violation by a certain date.

One previous easement ditching violation was outstanding during this period, however, by the time this report was written, restoration was completed.

*I am convinced that in areas of intensive farming all easements must be checked every year otherwise you are dealing with old ditches which are easy to miss and hard to get filled.
R&B*



Ten foot deep ditch put in to drain marsh on Easement (51X-2), Douglas County. This portion was dug with a dragline in the fall of 1973. The other half, not shown, was dug in the fall of 1974 when it was discovered. Restoration is still pending in this case.

Nord, Dec. '74

So get em!
R. Fries

*Man - why don't you move these ditches to the WPA boundaries -
a ditch that deep will stop a few of the vehicle trespass cases -
DM.*

VII. PUBLIC RELATIONS

A. Recreational Uses

Recreational vehicles, including snowmobiles, are not allowed on any units in the district. Some illegal snowmobile use occurs, but it seems to be decreasing.

Some units provide many hours of recreation to bird watchers and offer excellent opportunities for wildlife photography. Several units contain blocks of native prairie which harbor wide arrays of native plant species for those who enjoy natural areas.

B. Refuge Visitors

<u>Date</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Representing</u>	<u>Purpose</u>
3/22	John Rose	Mn. Cons. Fed.	Native grasses
4/24	Steve Oney	Nature Conserv.	Information
→ 7/19	C. A. Hughlett	Some wildl. outfit	Get educated
9/18	Gordon Hansen	Reg'l. Office	Tour of several WPA's
9/18	John Carlsen	Reg'l. Office	" " " "
9/18	Leo Kirsch	N. Pr. Wildl. Res. Sta.	" " "
9/28	Grady Mann	University of Mn.	Examine Headquarters
10/5	Gordon Hansen	Reg'l. Office	Business
10/5	Lowell Hoffman	Reg'l. Office	Business
11/27	Russ Miller	Reg'l. Office	Visit

*That's what I like
specific record
keeping. I get
a lot of those*

The above list includes only the more important visitors. On the average, we receive 45-50 visitors per month.

C. Refuge Participation

Our personnel participated in manning a booth and showing movies at a local "Save the Wetlands Club" smelt fry attended by some 2,500 individuals. Questions were answered and literature was distributed.

The manager conducted a tour of several WPA's to a group from the Minnesota Prairie Chicken Society and also to local high school students.

Several slide talks and movies were also shown at the Fergus Falls High School and a presentation on Career Days was given. Staff members regularly attend meetings of the local chapter of the Izaak Walton League and Sportsmen's Club. Finally, several news releases dealing with the wetlands program were printed in the local newspaper.

D. Hunting

The waterfowl hunting season opened at noon October 1, 1973. The duck season was split with a closed interim period of October 11th through the 20th. Hunting pressure on WPA's was estimated at about 65% of that recorded in 1972. Fifty-one hunters, checked opening day, had 68 ducks or 1.3 ducks per hunter. A hunt averaged about 3 hours per hunter.

Waterfowl continued to draw the most hunters to WPA's. Approximately 6,100 hunter visits were recorded for the district.

With increasing numbers of pheasants, pheasant hunting again became the number 2 hunting sport. Although the season was closed in Douglas County, 1,250 hunter visits were recorded, however, success remained comparatively low. Western Grant County and southwest Otter Tail County WPA's produced the best hunting.

Deer hunting, both bow and gun, became the third most important of the hunts. Approximately 500 hunter visits were recorded. Those WPA's having large cattail or timber areas are popular, especially if there is an associated standing corn field.

Snipe, ruffed grouse, squirrel, rabbit, crow, fox and coon hunting was significant but to a lesser degree. Raccoon and fox hunting increased because of the high fur prices.

E. Violations

No game law violators were apprehended by Wetland Management personnel in FY 1974. State Conservation officers did not report any apprehensions involving trespass in the cooperative closed areas.

Thirteen cases of trespass of various forms were brought to a conclusion. These involved 3 trespass farming, 1 grazing, 4 haying, 2 commercial bait trapping, and 3 private structures which included two sign boards and one electric fence.

Numerous wheeled vehicle trespass problems were stopped by fenced barricades, gates, and posting access points. Unfortunately, we were unsuccessful in apprehending any trespass snowmobilers. This form of trespass is still with us, however, it has seemed to diminish in recent years as the "word" is getting around.



Vukovich, Oct. '73

Two successful hunters that have an appreciation for
west Otter Tail County Waterfowl Production Areas.

Aint these the same guys in the picture on page 1



Tischer, Oct. '73



Safety first, lest of always!!
 Apt he's got his wallet in his pocket, too.
 Amm

Mansfield, Aug. '73
 Special Agent Joe Hopkins improvising a water propulsion system during an investigation of a commercial bait trapping operation on the Grewe WPA (67), Otter Tail County.



Waste not, want not!
 Amm

Mansfield, Sept. '73
 On the Sandberg WPA (264), Otter Tail County, the hired hand of the neighboring landowner couldn't let that fine alfalfa go to "waste". Haying trespass as extensive as this is rare. The neighbor ended up paying \$135.00 for the hay.

How much hay did he get b

F. Safety

Safety meetings are conducted on a regular monthly schedule at the Wetland Management Office. Occasionally a joint meeting is held with the Wetlands Office. Again this year, there were no lost time injury accidents.

Since 1963, 485,551 miles have been driven without a lost time injury and 165,551 miles were driven since the last vehicle property damage accident on September 18, 1970. When Safety hazards have been noticed during Safety inspections, these hazards have been promptly corrected.

G. Revenue Sharing

The revenue share checks were received favorably by all County Auditors. The amount of these checks increased little in recent years due in part by the lack of new land acquisitions during this period. Appraiser acquisition activity concentrated in counties outside this management district.

TABLE 11. Refuge Revenue Sharing Annual Payment to Counties in \$

<u>Year</u>	<u>Grant Co.</u>	<u>Douglas Co.</u>	<u>O. Tail Co.</u>	<u>Willkin Co.</u>	<u>Total</u>
1966	2,233.95	1,659.93	2,674.92	- - - -	6,568.80
1967	2,985.68	2,389.62	4,012.46	46.18	9,433.94
1968	3,455.39	2,800.24	4,012.46	172.65	10,440.74
1969	3,998.65	3,148.83	4,494.21	236.13	11,877.82
1970	4,448.23	3,502.18	5,053.45	387.01	13,390.87
1971	5,592.73	4,870.39	6,529.07	728.68	17,720.87
1972	6,039.80	5,050.55	7,857.71	773.68	19,721.74
1973	6,206.00	4,983.92	7,857.71	773.69	19,821.32
1974	6,209.75	4,991.42	8,456.15	773.69	20,431.01
<u>TOTALS</u>	<u>41,170.18</u>	<u>33,397.08</u>	<u>50,948.14</u>	<u>3,891.71</u>	<u>129,407.11</u>

VIII. OTHER ITEMS

A. Items of Interest

We were all saddened by the tragic death of summer student, Paula Schultz, on August 7, 1973. She was killed while riding home from work on her bicycle. Paula showed great promise as a future conservationist.

Biological Technician, Wayne Enquist, was transferred on November 23, 1973, to Aberdeen, South Dakota, as an appraiser.

Manager Trainee, Richard Tolbers, transferred to Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge as Assistant Refuge Manager on May 28, 1974.

Our maintenanceman, Luther "Si" Melby, was promoted to a WG-6 on January 20, 1974.

Seasonal Biological Aid, Lewis Young, resigned effective July 6, 1973, to take a job with the U. S. Department of Agriculture in New Mexico.

B. Credits

Credit for this report goes to the following people:

Richard Nord: Section I, IIF, III WPA Development and Maintenance, IV Resource Management, V, VI, VII D, E, G.

Charles Vukonich: II Wildlife, VII A, B, C, F, VIII.

Miss Urke: Typed and assembled the entire report.

Submitted by:

(Signature) Marvin Mansfield

Wetland Manager
Title

Date: March 6, 1975

Wetlands acquired here since

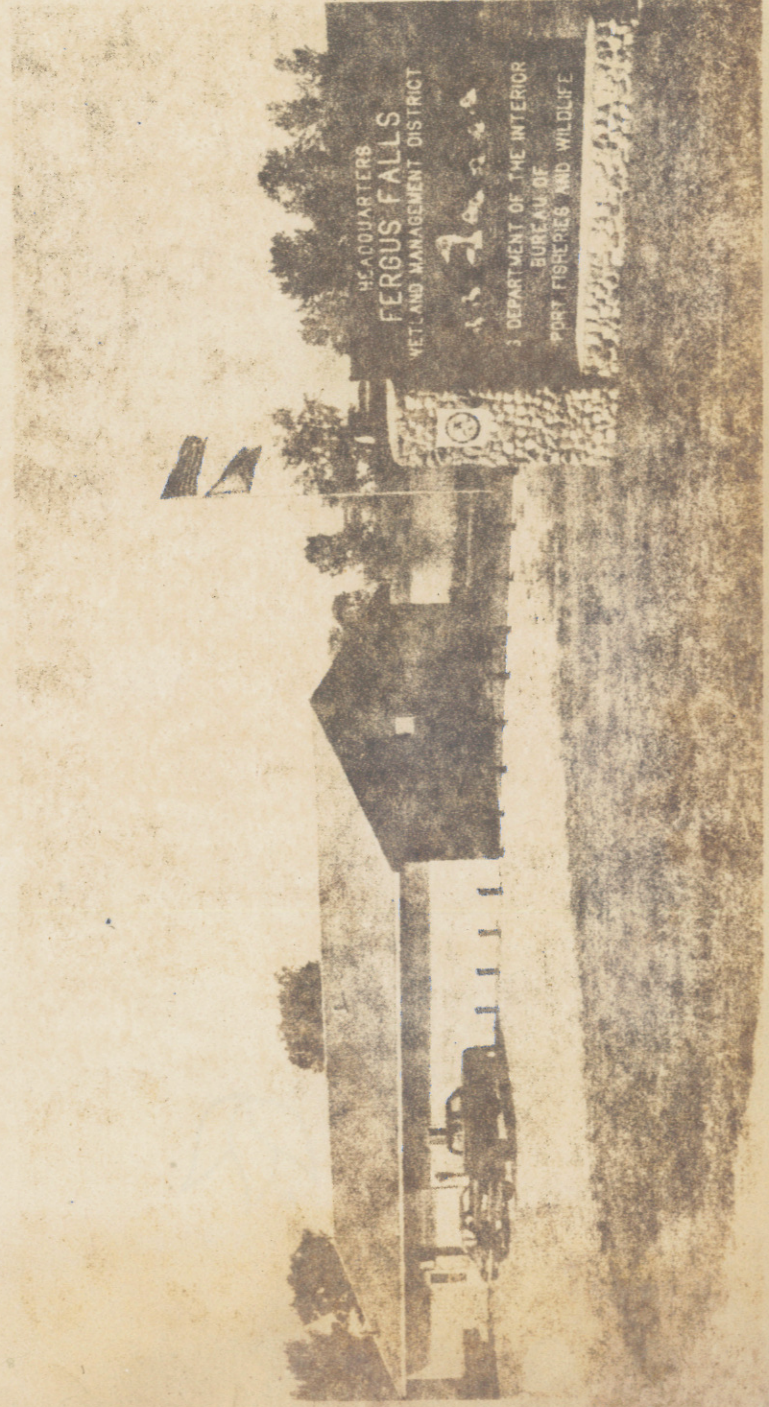
1961

By MARVIN MANSFIELD
Editor's note: Marvin Mansfield is wetland manager of the Fergus Falls Wetland Management Area, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Bureau of Sport Fisheries.

WETLAND. How would you describe a wetland? Webster says "swamps or marshes, especially as an area preserved for wildlife." Uninformed people think they are waste areas which interfere with such

things as farming, road construction, building construction and that they are only good for producing mosquitoes. As a result of this attitude wetland destruction has taken place at a very rapid rate.

The loss of this habitat was alarming to wildlife resource people, hunters, bird lovers and others who realized one of our greatest natural resources was disappearing, and something must be done to preserve as



many of the remaining wetlands as possible.

Congress reacted by passing legislation authorizing the acquisition of small wetlands. Wetland acquisition offices were established in North and South Dakota, Nebraska and Minnesota, one at Benson and the other at Fergus Falls. The first tract was optioned from the Fergus Falls office in August, 1961.

As acquisition progressed it became apparent that someone would be needed to manage these tracts after they were acquired. The first manager was George Gard and he was in charge from 1962 until 1968. Lou Swenson was the manager from 1968 to 1971. The present manager, Marvin Mansfield, has been in charge since August, 1971.

The Management Office was located with the Acquisition Office in downtown Fergus Falls until May, 1972, when it moved to its present location on Highway 210 1.2 miles east of Highway 59. There are presently 180 management units in Douglas, Grant, Otter Tail and Wilkin Counties being managed from this office. We call this area the Fergus Falls Wetland Management District.

The management unit contains a total of 26,000 acres, which means they average about 144 acres in size.

The Fergus Falls Fish and Game Club has been a strong supporter of the wetland program and without the support of organizations such as this program would not be possible.

Our challenge is to offset this past use and return to the scene a piece of landscape that will provide for public enjoyment of waterfowl and other wildlife.

Once these wetlands have been acquired, the wetland manager's job begins. Acquisition is not complete until the manager has a usable product on the land. He needs something on the ground to show where that piece of land is located. All boundaries are marked with a green and white WPA (Waterfowl Production Area) sign picturing a brood of canvasback ducks.

Because of an over-harvest of locally raised mallards, an experimental five-year federal and state wetland closed area program was initiated in 1969. To date 18 WPA's and 16 state wildlife management areas have been closed by order of the Minnesota Commissioner of Conservation which prohibits all public use of the areas from Sept. 1 through the end of the duck season. Through banding, breeding pair counts and brood counts, coupled with regular fall censusing we hope to measure the effectiveness of scattered WPA's as sanctuaries.

Our fencing program is designed to protect wildlife habitat. In some cases neighbors fail to respect our common boundary. Trespass farming and grazing is a continuing problem where often the only permanent solution is a fence.

Where farmsteads are purchased as part of a WPA the buildings are disposed of by a public sale at the earliest opportunity. Buildings which are unsuitable for sale or fail to be sold are burned during the winter months. Open foundations, wells, cisterns and scattered debris can be hazardous to the visiting public and so these building sites are removed with a dozer as soon as possible. Unsightly and

hazardous features such as junk piles, old machinery, car bodies and old fencing materials are buried within the old building foundations. The site is then seeded down to a grass mixture.

Many of the WPA's have some marches which have been drained in the past by prior landowners. These marshes are restored by plugging the drainage facilities with a dozer to return them to productive waterfowl habitats.

Our objective is to provide optimum habitat conditions for waterfowl and other forms of wildlife for enjoyment by people. To do this, good nesting cover, associated with good pothole habitat, is necessary. A good vegetation cover also retards wind and water erosion of the soil. Nearly all croplands on newly acquired WPA's are seeded down to native grasses or alfalfa-grass-clover mixtures. In 1973 about 150 acres were seeded to native grasses and 300 acres to a legume-grass mix using Bureau operated grass drills. These lands, plus several thousand acres of retired pasture lands,

provide much of the badly needed nesting cover requirements for wildlife in west central Minnesota.

The use of wildlife food patches to sustain local upland game populations during severe winters is an excellent management tool. Pheasants, deer, rabbits, squirrels and prairie grouse make use of these food patches in the district. Share crop agreements are in effect which will provide about 100 acres of standing corn in 5 to 10 acre patches.

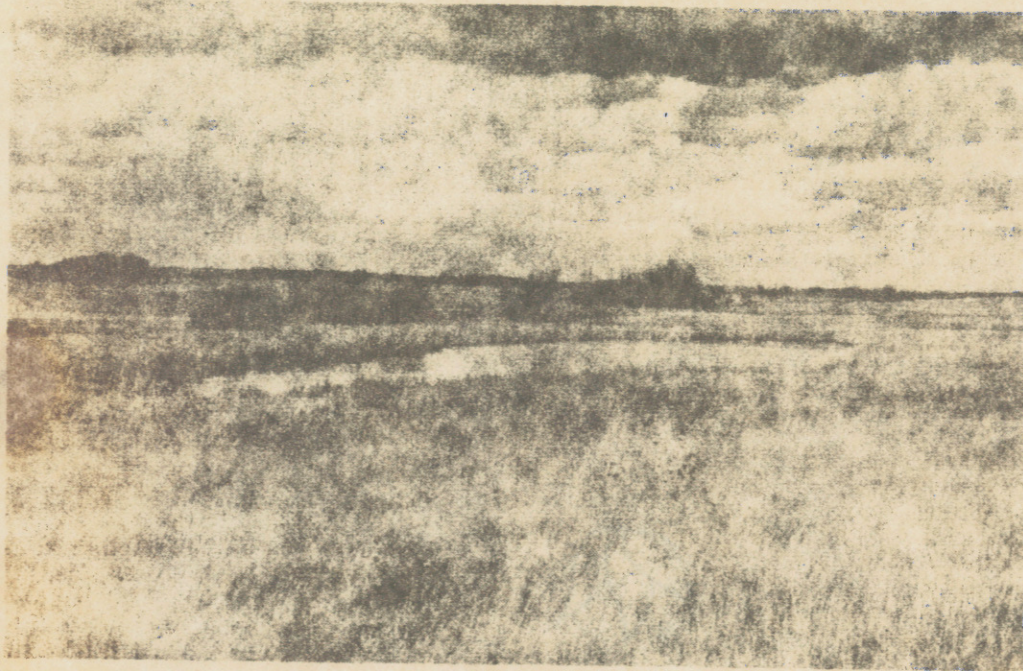
Controlled burning is another valuable management tool that can be used to maintain and manipulate upland vegetation. We are currently in the process of drawing up a controlled burning plan for our district.

Normally there is no haying or grazing because of cover destruction. Grazing on WPA's is only allowed when it is needed as a tool to benefit wildlife.

One of our biggest problems is the infestation of weeds such as Canada thistle and leafy spurge on WPA's in the district. Weeds such as these must be controlled to conform with state law. We feel the soundest long-range weed control program is land retirement and thus establishing a firm sod which will eventually crowd out the thistles. The first few years after seeding down a tract requires the greatest amount of weed control efforts. Thistle complaints are handled as rapidly as possible, using Bureau equipment.

Complaints on more distant tracts are handled by contracting with local farmers. Chemical weed control has been generally confined to leafy spurge. All known patches are recorded and efforts to control them with Tordon beads are begun in June. This is the fourth season the chemical has been applied on most tracts. Good success has been achieved and some patches have been reduced in density by 80 per cent.

Although these wetlands are being acquired primarily for duck production, and our management practices are designed to enhance this objective, most the waterfowl production areas are open to the public for hunting, bird watching and nature photography and they provide an enormous potential for



A typical wetlands area preserved

environment education. Such wildlife-oriented outdoor recreation is highly encouraged on WPA's. We want the public to use these areas but care must be taken to see that this land is not abused.

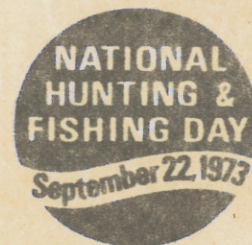
Since 1966 a total of 21 parking areas have been constructed on 16 management units. They are being constructed on the most attractive public use areas as the need develops to protect grassland habitat and also restore a little more "quality experience" by controlling unrestricted vehicle travel across the WPA's.

So far most of the responses received by the using public

have been quite favorable.

These public wetland areas provide essential habitat for many species of wildlife. Ducks are frequently seen in these areas. The most common nesting ducks are the blue-winged teal and the mallard.

Marsh and water birds such as the American bittern, American egret, great blue heron, black-crowned night heron, double-crested cormorant and coot are common summer residents in the district. The common loon, red-necked grebe, western grebe and sandhill crane are occasionally seen.



APR 16 1974
BUREAU OF SPORTS, FISH AND WILDLIFE

No ducking this issue

MAR 10, 1974

By Ted Peterson

There was no "ducking" a very real and ominous situation affecting locally raised ducks in Minnesota at the monthly meeting of Viking Sportsmen, Inc., at the Chateau Thursday night.

On hand was Marvin Mansfield of the Fergus Falls office of the U.S. Department of Interior charged with management of federal wetlands in Douglas, Grant, Ottertail and Wilkin counties.

Although Mansfield is in charge of operation and maintenance of 25,000 acres of wetlands in fee ownership,

10,000 acres under easement and still other areas, he pointed out many species that used to nest in the area in abundance are becoming scarce.

Better protection of local ducks in hunting regulations, acquisition of more wetlands, increasing habitat and predator controls were just some of the factors that underwent a lengthy discussion with a complement of more than 30 members of the Vikings.

There are no funds provided in Mansfield's activity for such things as improving habitat on the wetlands and in that connection the Vikings pledged assistance as a growing list of

projects for the Junior Viking branch of the club and for Future Farmers of America.

Acquisition of federal wetlands is financed through hunters and their payment on duck stamps, and some funds are available for additional purchases, Mansfield said. Again the Vikings volunteered full assistance.

Mansfield had high praise for the Vikings in their many facet approach to area conservation matters and said it was a rarity among sportsmen's clubs he had encountered in his many years of association with such groups. He also came in for a rousing round of applause for his highly knowledgeable and informative talk.

Vehicles banned on federal wetlands

The operation of any motorized vehicles is prohibited on all Federal Waterfowl Production Areas, and hunters are reminded that such trespass with their vehicles could land them in Federal Court.

Marvin Mansfield, area manager for the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, said today that the ban is necessary to prevent disturbance to wildlife and damage to nesting and winter cover.

For more information, you may visit the Wetland Management Office on Highway 210 East, Fergus Falls, or phone 736-3681. Federal wetlands in Douglas, Grant, Otter Tail and Wilkin Counties are managed from this office.

Wetlands money is distributed to county

The Federal Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife has distributed revenue sharing checks to counties with federal wetlands. Wetland Manager Marvin Mansfield has announced.

These checks have been distributed annually since 1966.

Otter Tail County received \$7,857.71 this year, and a total of \$42,491.99 since the revenue sharing started. By law, the money must be used for roads and schools, but it is up to the county to divide it as it wishes.

The wetlands (Waterfowl Production Areas) are a part of the National Wildlife Refuge system and the revenue sharing money comes from receipts from that system.

Many of the refuges and all the wetlands were purchased with money derived from the sale of duck stamps. These areas are valuable in providing homes for many species of wildlife, and, Mansfield says duck hunters deserve praise for their contribution.

The Federal Waterfowl

Production Areas in Douglas, Grant, Otter Tail and Wilkin Counties are managed from the Fergus Falls Wetland Management Office, which is located one mile east on Highway 210.

Wood Lake church burns

WOOD LAKE, Minn. (AP) — Wood Lake firemen today said a faulty furnace apparently started the fire which destroyed the Methodist Church.

A passing motorist discovered the blaze Friday and called firemen. Cottonwood firemen aided the Wood Lake volunteers in battling the flames.

There was no estimate of the loss. The structure was old, but had been remodeled a few years ago. The congregation had been planning to build a new church building next spring.

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Ways of saving prairie chickens sought at meeting

By BILL BANK
Area News Editor

"It is our responsibility to preserve all parts of the biotic community," Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Commissioner Robert Herbst said Saturday.

Part of that community is inhabited by prairie chickens and a near-capacity crowd filled the Fergus Falls Community College theater to listen to Herbst and several other speakers discuss ways of preserving the few remaining birds in Minnesota.

It was the first annual meeting of the Minnesota Prairie Chicken Society and Herbst told the gathering that the DNR was actively seeking ideas from persons throughout the state and country on ways of protecting prairie chickens, and hopefully, of increasing their number in years to come.

He said the state has acquired over 24,000 acres of prairie range and was requesting funding from the

Department of the Interior for purchasing more land that can accommodate endangered or threatened species.

Herbst asked the society to outline its goals and pass on ideas on ways of implementing them.

Two persons with very definite ideas on the subject were Doctors Fredrick and Frances Hamerstrom Jr. of Wisconsin who have been studying prairie chickens since 1939.

The two wildlife research biologists said a delicate balance among the various uses to which land is put is required for the chickens to flourish.

Contrary to what many people might assume, Hamerstrom said, agricultural use of land, to a certain degree, is of great benefit to prairie chickens.

During the late 1800's the prairie chicken population increased dramatically, and its habitat more than tripled. From a small oval circle in

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★Chickens

Continued from page 1

cluding Iowa, Wisconsin, Kansas, parts of the Dakots and Minnesota the birds' habitat spread West and North to almost triple that area increasing 1500 miles in size.

The reason—as farmers moved westward and northward the birds were able to feed off the grains from the farmers' fields while still retaining enough prairie on which to breed, Hamerstrom said.

For a time a ratio of about 75 per cent grass to 25 per cent plowed land enabled the birds to increase dramatically. Then the balance shifted again. The grasslands increasingly yielded to the farmers' plows and the prairie chicken population began to dwindle.

Today their habitat is probably not more than a tenth of what it was at the beginning of the century and there are almost no birds left in most states.

It was this change in land use which has cut the population, Hamerstrom said, not an overabundance of hunters.

Another thing which has hurt the population, he added, is the planting of trees. Especially in Wisconsin, and to a lesser degree in Minnesota, the planting of pine and other trees has ruined many booming grounds for the chickens.

And prairie fires, Hamerstrom said, which helped to keep trees from growing up on the plains, are becoming a thing of the past. Roads and other unnatural breaks in the prairie have kept prairie fires from thinning out the growth of trees.

Hamerstrom also cited increased crop spraying as having a detrimental effect on the chickens. All the effects of dusting with pesticides, insecticides and herbicides are not yet known, he said, but he believes those effects have nonetheless been bad for prairie chickens.

Steven Oney spoke for another group interested in preserving the prairie chicken. The Nature Conservancy has preserved 12,000 acres of land in Minnesota for endangered plants and wildlife, Oney said. Part of this land is on the rim of glacial Lake Agassiz. It is mediocre farm land, Oney said, and consequently still has a

good, natural cover and is a fine nesting area for prairie chickens.

The Nature Conservancy has purchased options on large tracts of land in this area and hopes to obtain more. Oney, Midwest director for the organization, said over 657,000 acres of land has been preserved by the Conservancy since it was formed in 1950.

Fergus Falls Mayor Barbara Donoho opened the meeting with an appeal to the community for growth without sacrificing the quality of the environment. The group heard reminiscences from Clarence Swenson, a retired farmer from Fertile, and Melvin Ouse, a Rothsay farmer, about the days when hearing the "booming" of prairie chickens was a common occurrence.

Marvin Mansfield of the Bureau of Sports, Fisheries and Wildlife in Fergus Falls chaired the event, which included a business meeting conducted by Grady Mann, president of the Minnesota Prairie Chicken Society.

In the afternoon the group toured wetlands in the area and Sunday morning observed some prairie chicken booming grounds.



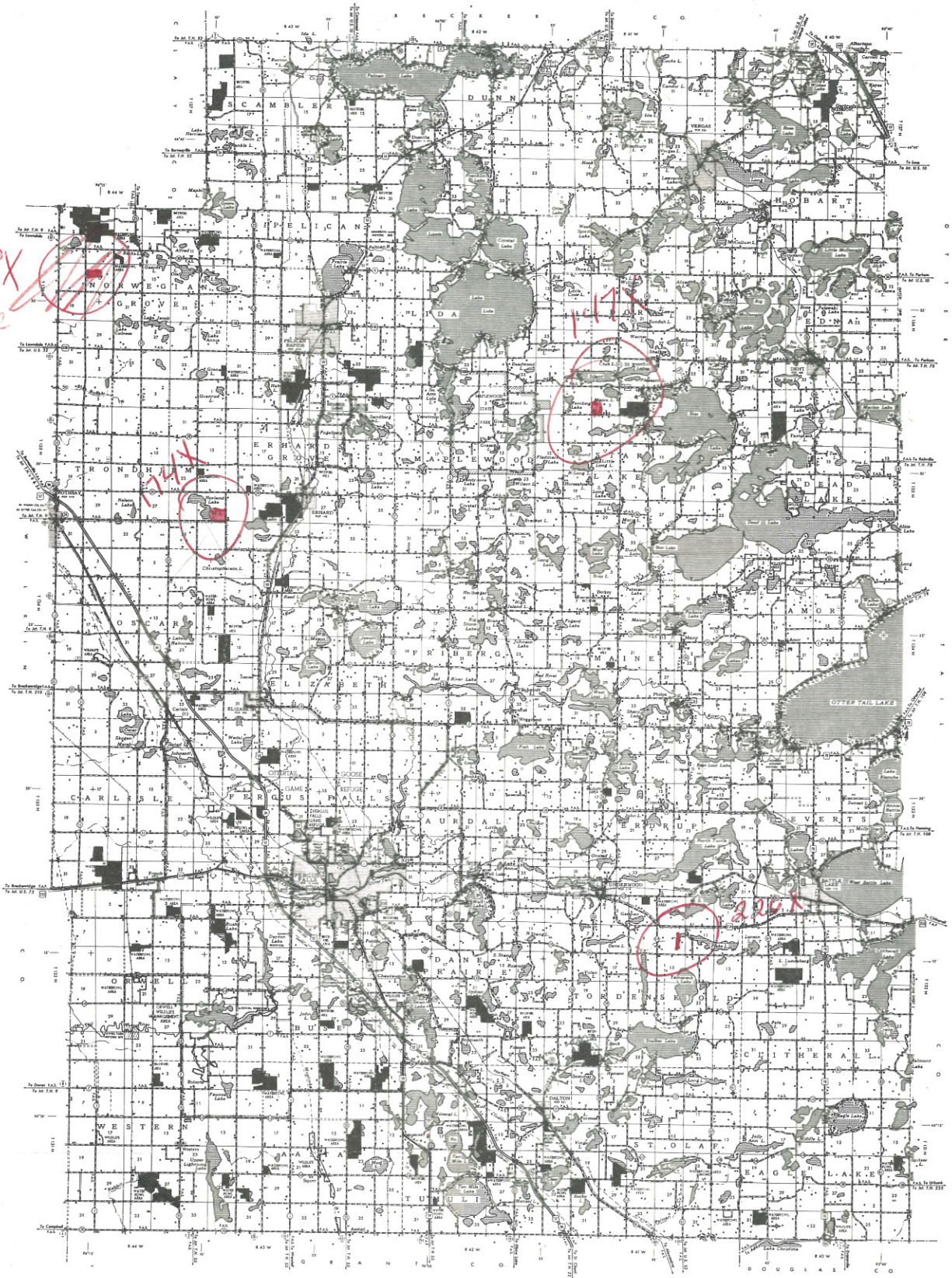
PRAIRIE CHICKEN PROTECTORS — Grady Mann, St. Paul, president of the Minnesota Prairie Chicken Society, talked with Doctors Frances and Fredrick Hamerstrom, wildlife research biologists from Wisconsin, during a break in the society's meeting at the Fergus Falls Community College. (Journal photo by Bill Bank)

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OTTER TAIL COUN

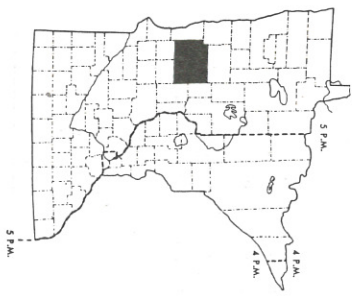
LEGEND

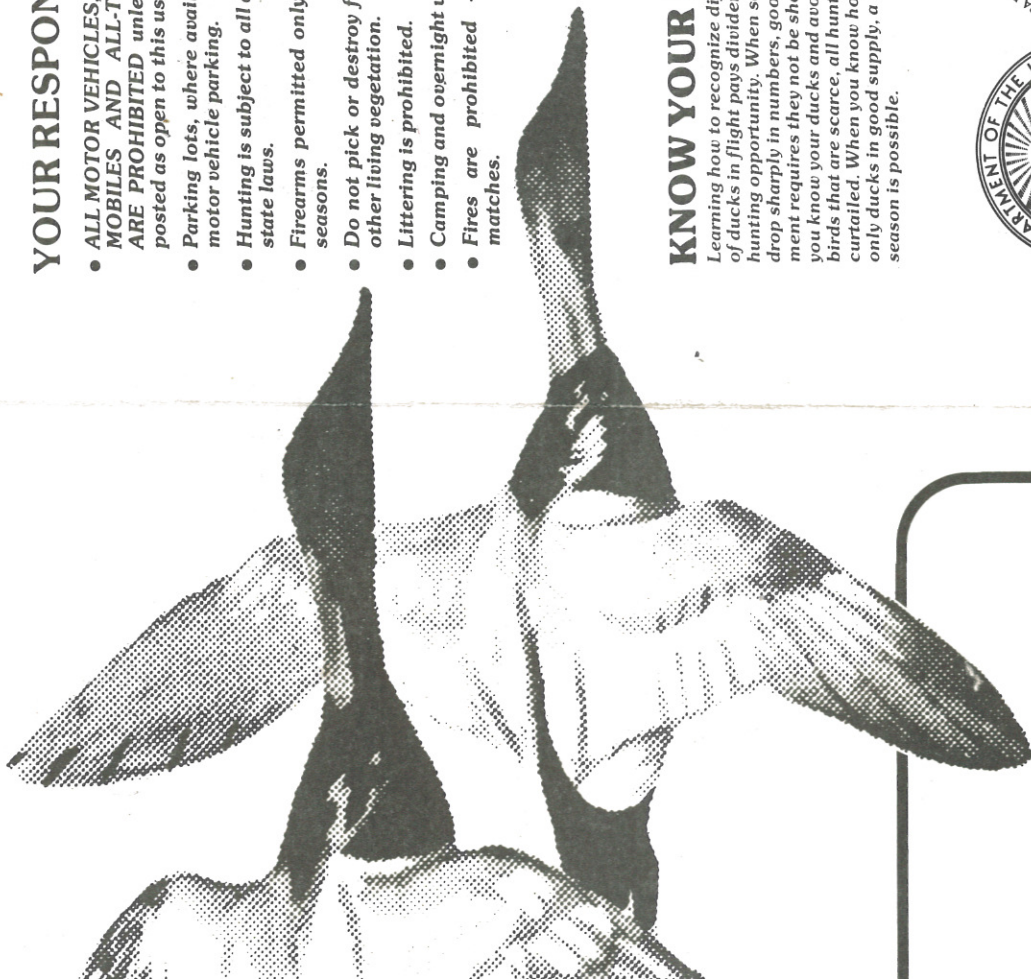
- Waterfowl Production Areas (Federal)
- Primitive Road
- Gravel or Stone Road
- Bituminous Road
- Paved Road
- Section Line
- Pond or Lake
- Wildlife Areas (State)

SCALE IN MILES



LOCATION MAP





YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES

- ALL MOTOR VEHICLES, INCLUDING SNOW-MOBILES AND ALL-TERRAIN VEHICLES, ARE PROHIBITED unless specific areas are posted as open to this use.
- Parking lots, where available, will be used for motor vehicle parking.
- Hunting is subject to all applicable federal and state laws.
- Firearms permitted only during open hunting seasons.
- Do not pick or destroy flowers, shrubs, or any other living vegetation.
- Littering is prohibited.
- Camping and overnight use is prohibited.
- Fires are prohibited -- use caution with matches.

KNOW YOUR DUCKS

Learning how to recognize different kinds of ducks in flight pays dividends in extra hunting opportunity. When some species drop sharply in numbers, good management requires they not be shot. Unless you know your ducks and avoid killing birds that are scarce, all hunting has to be curtailed. When you know how to harvest only ducks in good supply, a longer season is possible.



FOR MORE INFORMATION AND A FREE WATERFOWL IDENTIFICATION GUIDE WRITE:

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service
Federal Building, Fort Snelling
Twin Cities, Minnesota 55111

DECEMBER 1974

MAP OF TALL COUNTY OTTER West MINNESOTA

WATERFOWL PRODUCTION AREA



Purchased With Duck Stamp Dollars

**OPEN
TO PUBLIC HUNTING**

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

UNAUTHORIZED ENTRY PROHIBITED

WATERFOWL PRODUCTION AREAS

open in the fall to public hunting except where occasionally posted otherwise. Upland birds and big game may be hunted and furbearers trapped, in accordance with applicable federal and state laws.

DATE IN	DATE OUT	REFUGE	MANAGER	COMMENTS
Hi to all from the cool country (16° below this A.M.) We are in the process of remodelling our office so the folks in the Wetland Office can move in with us. a mess right now but will be nice when finished. Stop in for a visit if you get in the area. Marv				
3-13-75		Rice Lake	Don & Adams	
3/15/75				
3/19/75	4/4/75	Bennett WMD	Dick Leff	Good job as usual Marv! Nice selection of photos too Good Report Marv.
4/7/75	4/9/75	Big Stone	Cliff Gibbons	
4-10	4/18/75	Shelburne	Tom Wilkerson	Hi Marv - nice job, lotsa work.
4/21/75	4/25	Tamarac NWR	Ernie Deven	Quite the operation Marv.
4/25/75	4/29	Tomorrow WMD	Rolla Jueph	Very good
4-30-75		AGASSIZ	Joe Kotok	Sounds Great Marv, Dick
5/6/75	5/9/75	Valley City WMD	Dave Deke	Fine job Marv!
5/12/75	5/15/75	Devil Lake	Ralph Fink	Good work men.
5/16/75		Arrowood	Ed Marv	
6/2	6/4	Kulm WMD	Shufflin	Looks like you have a good area Marv. Good Report
6/5	6/9	Long Lake	Bill Right	
6/9	6/10	Audubon WMD	St. Germain	Good Report.
6/11	6/16	Salmon	Jon Malcom	
6/17	6/19	Deer	Stark	
6/20	6/23	Lathrop	Forrest Cameron	
6/25	6/25	Crosby WMD	Bill Threlbert	Not bad for a rookie, Marv.
6/30	6/30	Ottawa	Tim Levent	
7-2	7-3	Shiawassee	Bob Johnson	Makes me home sick Say hello to the guys
7/7/75	7/18/75	Seney	Quake Sany	
7/21/75	7/22/75	Horicon	Bob Peterson	Realduck country!
7/25	8/11/75	Necedah	Red Yell	
8/12	9/19/75	UPPER MSS	GUESSEL	Hi Marv
	9/25/75	Chautauque	Jim Tall	Hells Marv.
- 8-75	10/15/75	C.O. W. W.P.	Wayne	

		DATE		COMMENTS
10/17/75	10/29/75	Clarence	Clarence	Good job, Marv
10/30/75		Mark Yarn	Howard Lipke	Good work
11/24/75	11/24/75	Crab Orchard		Already been here!
11/30	12/3	Hastings WMD	Dave Rose	Nice looking country
12/7	12/9	Fort Johnson	Bob Ellis	
12/10/75	12/12	Crescent Lake	Ron Perry	
12/15	12/15	Lacreek		manager on leave
12/19	12/23	Lake Anderson	Jim Berby	
12/24	1/8/76	WETLAND MGT. DIST. MADISON, S. DAK. 57842	David Silbert	Long time, no see, Marv. Good job.
1/12/76	1/13/76	SAND LAKE NWR COLUMBIA, S. D. 57433	Wm McBair	Remember the Steel Hotel - Marv. It burned down in 1974
1/14/76	1/19/76	Waubesa NWR		
		Teaakon	Herb Troester	Good, Marv
1-29-76		James W. W. W.	Dick Hanson	nice report
2-24-76	3/3/76	Valley City WMD	Dave Joche	second visit. Looks like this one got on wrong track.
I. t sure did Dave. Thanks for returning. It's been through Region III and part of Region VI. Marv				
3/12/76	3/15/76	McIntosh Lake NWR	Joseph Bellinger	Excellent program.
3/18/76	3/18/76	CMR - Ft. Belknap	Joe Shupe	
3/19/76		HL Band (Pine)	G. Foster	Hi Marv Good Report
3/29/76	5/5	CMR Russell	Joseph. Calvert	Nice report
4/9/76	4/13/76	Becker Lake		
4/13/76	4/27/76	Des Moines Range	Dr. A. Knutke	
	5/3	Kanelli	Al. Hunt	
5/5	5/7	RED ROCK LAKES	F.D. STROOPS	
5/11	5/14	Beaver River mar	Ned I. Penbody	Looking good de Svengali
5/18	5/26	Fish Springs	Rolf A. Kraft	OK

JUN 3/76	6/4	Ourray		
6/10/76	6/14/	Brown Pt.	Jim Crasey	Very good - enjoyed it
6/19/76	7/31/76	Seedsucker	H. Johnson	Good Report
8/6/76	8/11/76	Arapaho	Donner	
12/21/76	1/4	Kiowa	K. Hansen	
1/18/76	2/4/77	Deloto	Freetes	
2/7/77	2/11/77	Union Slough National Wildlife Refuge TITONKA, IOWA		Revising your report made me somewhat nervous -
2/17	2/18/77	Mingo	G. L. Clawson	Hi Nov. - excellent report - enjoyed it
2/21/77	2/22/77	Squaw Creek	Nugent	Sortin' good Nov., especially
2/24/77	2/25/77	Swan Lake	L. O. Merkle	in the Staff picture. ^{Good} Report.